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SUBJECT: KIRKUK OFFICIALS TELL DEPUTY SECRETARY ABOUT
ARTICLE 140, LACK OF RECONSTRUCTION, SECURITY AND THE PC
BOYCOTT

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Patricia A. Butenis for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

This is a Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)
message.

¶1. (C) Summary: Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte met with Kirkuk Governor Abdulrahman and Provincial Council Chairman Rizgar Ali November 29. The two senior provincial officials expressed their frustration with the Central Government in Baghdad and outlined their requests for funding of major reconstruction projects. Discussions centered on status of Kirkuk/Article 140 implementation, security, reconstruction efforts, and the ongoing Arab-Turkman boycott of the Provincial Council. End Summary.

Article 140

¶2. (C) Regarding the implementation of Article 140, the Governor claimed that "once the issue of Article 140 is resolved, all other problems in Kirkuk will go away." (Note: Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution directs the Government of Iraq to resolve the issue of Kirkuk and other disputed territories. End Note) PC Chairman Rizgar expressed concern that December 2007 would try the relations between the ethnicities in Kirkuk Province as the deadline for the Article 140 referendum approaches. Rizgar stressed that relations between the various ethnicities of Kirkuk were generally positive and that most people were supportive of the political process, although he recognized that some political parties were purely disruptive. Rizgar disagreed with existing rumors that Kirkuk is a "hot spot," adding that the situation is better than before. Ambassador Satterfield indicated that Article 140 should be carefully addressed in a transparent manner so as not to support the insurgents' agenda.

Arab-Turkman Boycott of the
Provincial Council

¶3. (C) On the issue of the Arab-Turkman boycott of the Provincial Council, Rizgar indicated that the Kurdish-led Kirkuk Brotherhood List (KBL) was very close to reaching an agreement with the Arab bloc and he hoped to share good news within a few days. Rizgar said that attempting to coordinate the agendas of the three primary ethnicities was proving to be particularly difficult. Rizgar noted that three political agendas existed with regard to Kirkuk -- the Kurdish political parties, Turkey (emphasizing he meant the country and not local Turkmen) and the Baathist movement. He lamented KBL had been unable to seal an agreement with the Arab bloc to end the boycott, despite coming close on several occasions. Key members within the Arab bloc were receiving instructions from Baathist leaders to disrupt any agreement,

he charged. Rizgar reassured the Deputy Secretary that the KBL was being extremely flexible during negotiations with the Arab bloc and he noted that the Arab bloc had recently promised to end their boycott of the Provincial Council. Regarding the Turkmen bloc, Rizgar explained that it was split in half, with one side led by the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) and the other side aligned with the Shia Turkmen. Rizgar claimed that, while he enjoys good relations with the Shia Turkmen, those related to the ITF are receiving funding from Turkish intelligence. (Note: on December 4, the Arab bloc officially ended their boycott and returned to the PC. End Note)

Reconstruction Needed;
Central Government Unresponsive

¶4. (C) Regarding reconstruction efforts, Governor Abdulrahman complained that despite many requests for funding from the central government in Baghdad, the GoI was largely unresponsive. Abdulrahman agreed that there have been many improvements to security, although he called for more sophisticated equipment, particularly to counter IED and VBIEDs at traffic control points. The Governor claimed that, despite repeated lobbying trips to Baghdad, the ministries continued to ignore the province's requests for a new airport, hospital, and public refinery. A new public refinery was essential because Kirkuk otherwise was over-reliant on the refinery at Bayji in Salah al-Din Province. He admitted that Kirkuk's fuel situation had improved; however, there would be difficulty coping with any potential breakdown at the Bayji refinery. The Governor regretted that Baghdad funding to rebuild bridges was also not forthcoming. Lastly, he cited the need for a new

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university; the current university was at full capacity, he claimed, and prospective students were reluctant to travel outside the province due to security concerns. Rizgar indicated that no central government ministers had visited the province with the exception of the Minister of Oil, who Rizgar said had visited Kirkuk "secretly."

Security Improved

¶5. (C) The Governor and the Chairman of the Provincial Council affirmed that the security situation had improved. However, they indicated a need for additional equipment for the Iraqi Police (IP) and Iraqi Army (IA.) They also stated a need for funds to compensate the families of those wounded or killed.

¶6. (U) The Deputy Secretary's party has cleared this cable.
BUTENIS